

Political party financing and the ineffectiveness of the not-too-young-to-run act (NTYTRA) in Nigeria

Ifeanyichukwu **Abada**^{1,*}, Raymond **Adibe**^{1,2}, Chinedu **Ejezie**¹ & Okorie **Albert**¹

¹Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

²Gender and Development Policy Centre, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

*Corresponding Author: raymond.adibe@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper examined the link between political party financing and the ineffectiveness of the NTYTRA in Nigeria and contends that the poor regulation of party financing, which is one of the features of the post-colonial state of Nigeria, not only led to certain alterations in the age reduction bill but also undermined the purpose of the final act. While our analysis is based on the framework provided by the post-colonial state theory, a mixed method of data collection was adopted for the study. The paper argued that the continuous overbearing influence of party financiers on electoral outcomes is a possible cause of alienation of young political aspirants from electoral positions. We therefore recommend the need for effective regulation of relevant laws on party financing and a review of the identified provisions in the NTYTRA that undermine the fair participation of young political aspirants in electoral contests.

Keywords: Party financing, NTYTRA, Nigerian state, 2019 general elections and Youths

Introduction

Political parties in party democracies like Nigeria mostly perform the role of mobilizing political support for their preferred candidates in elections. Moreover, the strategic importance of youths in the political process due to their high voting power in most countries means that most political parties would try to win their support by propagating policies they think will be popular among them. Some parties even provide quotas for youths running for elective offices during general elections. However, most political parties, irrespective of ideologies and democracies, have failed to promote youth representation in elective positions worldwide. As noted by Mexhuani and Rrahmani (2017), these failures have led to many civil society movements across the world advocating and promoting the participation of young people in the political process, as well as advancing the campaign to increase the representation of young people in elective political offices.

The low representation of youths in elective political positions is a global problem; hence it has become a matter of worldwide priority to promote the representation of young people in contested political positions. The

situation in Africa is however worse with the continent having the lowest ratio of elected political office holders below 40 years of age when compared with other continents (IPU 2018). The situation is worrisome considering that young people between the ages of 15 and 35 constitute one-third of Africa's population. The Nigerian situation is no different from that of the African continent and appears worse when compared to most of the countries in the continent. Although young people between 15 and 35 years constitute more than half of Nigeria's population based on the National Population Commission's data of 2017, those within 40 years occupied less than 5% of all elective political offices contested between 1999 when Nigeria returned to civilian rule and the 2015 general elections (Ejezie 2020). Some literature like Akande (2014), Osakwe (2013), Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012) and Ofem and Ajayi (2008) attribute low youth representation in elective political positions in Nigeria to factors like youth unemployment, poverty, and lack of consistency in youth empowerment policies and programmes of federal and state governments. However, while youths in Nigeria and Africa at large have been the worst hit by rising unemployment and poverty, attributing

their low occupation of elective positions in politics to these factors generalises the problem since it is a global phenomenon irrespective of the level of economic development. As buttressed by Ejezie (2020), in economically developed countries like the United States, youth representation in politics is also not high. The average age of members of the 115th US Congress and Senate was 57.8 years and 61.8 years respectively. One factor that however undermined young people's involvement in electoral contests in Nigeria was the constitution of the country. In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution (as amended in 2011) prevented many youths from seeking election into certain political offices by setting age restrictions too high for those political offices. It disqualified persons below the ages of 40, 35, and 30 from contesting during the Presidential election, Governorship and Senate elections, and House of Representative and House of Assembly elections respectively (Etim and Duke 2019). In fact, a serving Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives was impeached and removed after it was established that he was 29 years at the time of his election.

The Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA Africa) started the campaign to reduce the running age

for elective offices in Nigeria. The campaign was popularized by the social media hashtag '#NotTooYoungToRun'. This campaign gained both national and international attention, and with increased social media followership, public support for the campaign increased. YIAGA Africa initiated bills that were sponsored by two members of Nigeria's parliament in order to introduce a constitutional reform that will increase the participation of young candidates in electoral contests in Nigeria and their representation in elective political offices. According to Ejezie (2020), the bills sought alterations to some constitutional provisions that border on age restrictions for running for elective offices. It also sought to allow for independent candidacy in elections in Nigeria so that young people whose values and vision contradict any of the existing political parties can also run as independent candidates. The bill became an Act popularly referred to as the Not-Too-Young-to-Run Act (NTYTRA) after President Buhari signed it into law on 29 May 2018. It is argued by the administration of President Buhari that the NTYTRA will significantly provide better opportunities and platforms for Nigerian youths to become active participants in national development for

it will give them better access to a political power that can be used to influence public policy. However, that possibility is threatened by the nature and character of the Nigerian state.

The Nigerian state at independence lacked both internal cohesion and enduring institutions to form the basis of a stable regime. This was because the indigenous ruling class that took over from the Colonial administration was more preoccupied with appropriating the privileges of colonialism than abolishing its injustice and oppression of the Nigerian masses (Ekekwe 1986). The power struggle was prioritized above all other struggles among the indigenous ruling class because whichever faction won power privatized it (Fadakinte 2013). As noted by Ake (1985) and Collier (2010), anything that affects the prospect of power in post-independence Nigeria is contested bitterly, lawlessly and violently, so whenever the election cycle comes, factions become lawless, with no regard for the rules guiding electoral contests. Since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, one of the common ways the desperation to win or retain power by those in the political class has manifested itself is through the use of money or funds to compromise the entire electoral process beginning from the nomination

of political parties' flag bearers to the general election stage.

While funds are strategic in meeting the needs of political parties in modern democracies, there are however regulations on how they can be generated and utilized, with these regulations varying from one country to another. In Nigeria, the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) provides a guideline on party funding. Despite the subsisting legal framework, multiparty electoral democracy in Nigeria has witnessed repeated violations of this regulation. The violations are connected to the post-independence nature and character of the Nigerian state. There has been an unchecked influx of funds and other materials to political parties and their candidates, especially during party primaries and campaigns for general elections. As noted by Albert (2018), this has created an unfortunate situation within parties in Nigeria where party financiers play a determining role in the emergence of some candidates as party flag bearers for the election.

The conduct of the 2019 general election in Nigeria provided the first real test for the NTYTRA, being the first general election conducted in Nigeria after the Act became operational. Millions of

Nigerian youths that would have been ineligible to seek certain political offices due to their age were qualified to contest. Sadly, the primaries of the dominant political parties in the run-up to the 2019 general election continued to reflect the colonial origin of the Nigerian state and its ruling class. Political parties not only violated the provisions of the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) that regulated campaign funding, but they also made the cost of purchasing party tickets so exorbitant that many prospective young candidates could not afford it. Thus this paper examined the link between political party financing and the ineffectiveness of the NTYTRA in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted mixed methods of data collection that included the documentary and Key Informants' Interviews (KIIs). These methods helped the researchers to glean information and data from already documented sources and get first-hand information from stakeholders (young aspirants in the 2019 general election and civil society advocates). The justification for the mixed methods is that while the KIIs give insights into the views of some critical stakeholders like young political aspirants and civil society advocates about party

financing and the NTYTRA, the documentary method is well-suited for contextual analysis and useful when the task is to glean, illuminate, interpret and extract valuable information to draw inference from the available evidence. Moreover, while data from secondary sources constitute the bulk of the data used in the analysis, opinions of some critical stakeholders as expressed in the KIIs can be used to validate and support data generated using the documentary method. Therefore, we essentially relied on articles in journals and Nigerian newspapers, official publications of non-governmental organizations on the subject matter and information provided by respondents during KIIs.

For the KIIs, we used purposive sampling to select 15 respondents out of which 3 were leading figures in YIAGA AFRICA and 12 were young aspirants in the 2019 general election that were under 40 years at the time of the electoral conduct. We adopted purposive sampling because the willingness to be a respondent was a key factor in the selection process, and also, only a limited number of individuals possessed the traits the researchers targeted. Among the 12 aspirants, 2 were selected from each of the 6 geopolitical zones in Nigeria and they included respondents from the All Progressive

Congress (APC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Labour Party (LP), Young Progressive Party (YPP), African Action Congress (AAC), KOWA Party (KP) and Youth Party (YP). Content analysis based on logical deduction was applied in the analysis of the documentary evidence used.

The Nature of Party Politics in Nigeria and the 'Sabotage' of the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Movement: A Theoretical Analysis

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation in which, upon independence, the dictatorial tendencies of the colonial power that created it was inherited and sustained by the ruling class that replaced the colonial administration. Rather than establish a people-oriented system of governance, the post-colonial state further alienated the people, and as the primitive competition for power got fiercer, different fractions and factions of the political elite employed anti-democratic tactics like ethnicity, forceful suppression of rights, recruitment of political protégés, among others, to either secure their hold on power or carryout a reactionary change of power (Ake 1992, 1984; Ibeanu 1998; Ekekwe 1986). Although the idea of democracy,

according to Nodia (2006), is presently very strong at the global ideological level and very few authoritarian rulers would actively defend traditional authoritarian modes of rule, this liberal perception of democracy is sadly misconstrued by African leaders to mean civilian rule. In fact, liberal democracy in post-colonial African states like Nigeria reduces the meaning of democracy to the rule of the market based on the forces of demand and supply and reliance on the ballot box (Ake 1992, 1984).

Since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, different civilian administrations have successfully conducted five (5) electoral transitions without interruptions. The 2015 presidential election was the country's first and only successful transition from a ruling party to an opposition party. It was also the first election that removed an incumbent President from power. While 22 years of uninterrupted civilian rule with numerous periodic elections in-between may suggest that democracy has become institutionalized in Nigeria, the character of the Nigerian state has remained the same. Adibe, Ike and Udeogu (2017) noted that successive civilian governments continue to exhibit the same undemocratic tendencies that characterized the state under military

rule. This character is rooted in the colonial legacy of the Nigerian state. The state is heavily policed (Asogwa, et al, 2021) and it is seen by the ruling class as an instrument of primitive accumulation of wealth. That defines the character of the government.

The implication of the above is that Nigeria is a democracy with so many 'illiberal' attributes. Politics is all-consuming and the struggle for political power remains fierce and primitive despite the transition from colonial rule to self-rule and the transition from military rule to now over two decades of uninterrupted civilian rule. The primitive nature of the struggle for political power has further reduced the conduct of elections at all tiers of government to a 'ceremonial' exercise where candidates are foisted on the people by the leading political parties. These leading parties maintain imbalanced financial and power relations with the smaller political parties while the latter often lack the funds to effectively mount a challenge at the polls. The character of political leadership and the nature of the electoral struggle in post-independence Nigeria have led to a gross violation of electoral rules.

Political parties have become accomplices of the ruling class in undermining

democracy through the adoption of unlawful and anti-democratic processes in the nomination of party flag bearers for elections and violations of campaign funding guidelines. These practices have significantly undermined democratic consolidation since the return to civilian rule in 1999 and the electability of youths that aspire for public offices. Olarinmoye (2008) blamed this on political parties' excessive dependence on individual donors to fund elections in Nigeria. He argued that these donors or financiers have an overbearing influence on party affairs including determining party flag bearers in general elections. They are mostly petite bourgeoisie who amassed enormous wealth through the instrumentalities of the Nigerian state and rely on using primitive accumulated funds to hijack the leadership structures of political parties as a means of either directly competing for state power or projecting a candidate they can control. The attempt by civil society groups and the general public to initiate a change has grossly been undermined by the nature of party politics in Nigeria where parties are forced to do the bidding of their financiers to the detriment of public interest.

A careful examination of the advocacy that led to the emergence of the NTYTRA

will show how the character of the Nigerian state as exemplified in the 'privatized' management of political parties by party financiers grossly undermined the ability of the Act to promote the election of youths into public offices in the 2019 general election. The civil society-led #NotTooYoungToRun campaign was opposed by the political class through a backward infiltration of the movement. For analytical purposes, backward infiltration involves conscious strategies adopted by state actors, mostly incumbent politicians and political party officials, to mobilize or reshape a civil society struggle either to solidify the existing regime's legitimacy or to promote the actors' political and economic agenda (Klein and Lee 2019). With Nigeria being a constitutional democracy, it was obvious that the campaign needed more than massive public support to effect an institutional change. After massive public campaigns and pressure for change, a bill of parliament was drafted and sponsored by two members of the parliament who were elected under the platforms of the two leading parties in Nigeria, but sadly, members of the parliament in Nigeria mostly vote in line with the interest of their campaign financiers. They either

project their campaign financiers' interests in the parliament or risk losing their party's nomination for re-election. Moreover, since a significant number of votes are needed in the parliament to force through a constitutional change, party financiers usually engage in 'illicit lobbying' that costs an outrageous amount of money. The overbearing influence of the parties' financiers in the emergence of party flag bearers and the performance of candidates in elections in Nigeria often results in most members of the parliament being unwilling to vote against these financiers' interests.

The above condition created the avenue for party financiers of the two leading political parties in Nigeria (APC and PDP) to sabotage the #not-too-young-to-run campaign. The leaders of these parties declared 'lip-service' support for the campaign chiefly for the sole purpose of increasing their approval ratings and drawing larger national support. The two leading parties also promised some concessions to young candidates that would contest in their parties' primaries ahead of the 2019 general election. However, with the bill in the parliament, civil society groups and the general public had little influence on deliberations and the same political parties and politicians that openly

declared support for the bill voted for some alterations that ultimately defeated the overall objective the bill sought to achieve. When the bill was finally signed

into law, the final version of the NTYTRA was significantly different from the original demands of the campaign championed by civil society.

Table 1: Changes made by Members of Parliament to the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill before Presidential Assent

Demands of the #NotTooYoungToRun Movement	Actual Provisions in the Bill sent to the President for Approval	Remarks
Reduce the constitutional running age for the Office of the President from 40 to 30	Reduced to 35 years	Minor moderation from the original demand
Reduce the constitutional running age for Governorship election from 35 to 30	Reduced to 30	No moderation from the original demand
Reduce the constitutional running age for Senate from 35 to 30	Reduced to 30	No moderation from the original demand
Reduce the constitutional running age for the House of Representatives from 30 to 25	Reduced to 25	No moderation from the original demand
Reduce the constitutional running age for the State House of Assembly from 30 to 25	Reduced to 25	No moderation from the original demand
Allow independent candidacy in all elections in Nigeria	Not included in the final draft of the bill	Fundamentally undermined the original purpose of the #NTYTR campaign
Regulate the cost of party nomination forms to make it affordable to young people	Not included in the final draft of the bill	Fundamentally undermined the original purpose of the #NTYTR

		campaign
Set a term limit for both federal and state parliamentarians to avoid the sit-tight syndrome associated with patronage politics in Nigeria	Not included in the final draft of the bill	Fundamentally undermined the original purpose of the #NTYTR campaign

Source: Authors' Compilation from media reports, KIIs, the Age Reduction Bill and the NTYTRA

A critical evaluation of party politics and elections in Nigeria will make us understand how these alterations as seen in Table 1 undermined the competitiveness of young candidates in the 2019 general election. Despite being a multi-party state, Nigeria is in reality a two-party dominant state, with two parties winning more than 90% of the contestable political offices since the return to civilian rule in 1999 (although one of these parties metamorphosed with new names at different stages). The two biggest political parties in Nigeria (the ruling APC and its main opposition, PDP) continue to dominate political contests. Sadly, the two parties remain controlled by the financiers who are preoccupied with the primitive control of national wealth and have done little to promote youth representation in elective offices. Internal party operations of these two parties favour patronage politics over fair electoral contests.

Election into political offices in Nigeria can only be actualized through the platform of a political party as the constitution does not allow people to run as independent candidates in local, state and federal elections. Registered political parties are also required by law to be operational in all states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT); thus state-based political parties are not recognized by law in Nigeria. The centralized nature of political party control in Nigeria and the persistence of the patronage system have continued to undermine transparency in party politics as party laws are manipulated by party financiers to influence party decisions on, for instance, the nomination of party flag bearers for general elections. Party financiers have an overbearing influence on the internal affairs of the two dominant parties in Nigeria and often manipulate the nomination processes to ensure the nomination of themselves or

their preferred candidates as flag bearers during primaries.

One strategy used to influence the outcomes of party primaries is fixing the cost of party nomination tickets too high to discourage many young people from running since they cannot afford to buy

the nomination ticket of their respective parties. A look at the cost of purchasing party nomination forms for electoral contests in the APC and PDP as seen in Table 2 gives a clearer understanding of this.

Table 2: Cost of Nomination Forms in the APC and PDP for the 2019 General Elections

Nomination Form	APC (in Naira)	PDP (in Naira)
Presidential Ticket	45 million	12 million
Governorship Ticket	22.5 million	6 million
Senate Ticket	7 million	3.5 million
House of Representatives Ticket	3.85 million	1.5 million
State House of Assembly Ticket	850,000	600,000

Source: Authors' Compilation from APC and PDP Press releases on their Modalities for Seeking Nomination Forms for the 2019 General Election

There are very few youths in Nigeria that can afford these nomination forms without relying on public funds, loans or funding from a political financier. Young candidates often lack the financial capability to pay such huge amounts of money to purchase the forms of the dominant parties and as a result, are mostly discouraged from contesting. Works like Dovi (2002), Kronk and Nugent (2018), and Wang (2019) have

established the connection between the cost of running for an office and young people's decision not to contest. In Nigeria, some young contestants sometimes cross-carpet from the dominant parties (APC and PDP) to relatively unknown parties where their chances of winning the parties' nominations are higher, but these relatively unknown political parties mostly lack the necessary human and personnel resources to run competitive

campaigns in local, state or federal elections.

In the final analysis, the character of the Nigerian state sustains a party system that is rooted in 'money bag' politics. This system alienates the public and undermines the competitive participation of young candidates in electoral contests. Despite the existence of an Electoral Act

that ought to regulate party financing, the character of the Nigerian state which makes electoral contests often unfair and guided by lawlessness results in weak enforcement of the Act. Table 3 shows some of the cases of party financing violations not prosecuted by the election management body in Nigeria since the return to civilian rule in 1999.

Table 3: Selected cases of over-financing of electoral campaigns in Nigeria by the Dominant Political Parties

S/N	Selected cases	Political party	Estimated amount spent on the campaign (in Naira)	Spending limit as contained in the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) (in Naira)
1*	2011 Presidential campaign of Jonathan/Sambo	PDP	15 billion	1 billion
2^	2015 Presidential campaign of Jonathan/Sambo	PDP	8.74 billion	1 billion
3^	2015 Presidential campaign of Buhari/Osinbajo	APC	3 billion	1 billion
4+	2019 Presidential campaign of Atiku/Obi	PDP	2.87 billion	1 billion
5+	2019 Presidential election of Buhari/Osinbajo	APC	4.6 billion	1 billion

Source: *authors' adaptation from Albert (2018), ^authors' adaptation from Daily Trust (2019), +culled from Yagboyaju and Simbine (2020)

Impact of the Weak Regulation of Party Financing and the Alterations of Not Too Young To Run Demands on the 2019 General Election: Implications for Young Political Aspirants

Although the signing of the age reduction bill into law by President Buhari was widely considered a victory for civil society groups in Nigeria and the general public at large, the impact of the moderations made to the original bill presented to the parliament was not immediately evident to many observers and analysts until the timetable for the 2019 general election was released by the country's election management body. The 2019 general election was the first conducted after the NTYTRA became operational and it gave many young Nigerians the opportunity to contest elective offices which they would have been ineligible to run for had the law not been signed. However, the general election also exposed how the nature of party financing in Nigeria undermined the effectiveness of the Act. The electoral outcomes in most of the contested positions were disastrous for young aspirants and also not fundamentally different from the results of past general elections since the return to civilian rule in 1999.

The lack of corresponding reform in the internal affairs of the dominant political parties in Nigeria severely limited the competitiveness of many young aspirants during the parties' primary processes. Moreover, the overbearing influence of party financiers remained a deciding factor in the party nomination processes of the APC and PDP. As observed by Ejezie (2020), these two parties were accused on countless occasions in many states of unfair selection of people that were more inclined to vote in accordance with the interest of the parties' campaign financiers. Party financiers had a vested interest in almost all available offices and manipulate the delegate selection process to ensure that only those that will vote for their interests are selected. In addition, the popular view shared by respondents is that the hierarchical nature of party control from federal to local level also means that the delegate selection process for national conventions of parties is most times unfairly manipulated with party financiers unduly favouring their cronies who are mostly career and veteran politicians. With the electoral act not allowing independent candidacy, many youths were forced to seek their political aspirations in other political parties that lack both the financial and personnel resources to

compete even in a local election. Even if independent candidacy was allowed, the relationship between fund availability and electoral aspiration means that most young Nigerians who belong to the low-income earning group will still be unable to run a viable campaign for the electoral office. Our KIIs corroborated this viewpoint as all respondents agreed that

young aspirants without the backing of party financiers could not effectively compete in both party primaries and general elections against candidates that had enormous financial backing. Table 4 clearly shows the difficulty in winning elections in Nigeria outside the platform of the ruling party (APC) and the main opposition party (PDP).

Table 4: Summary of the Performances of Political Parties in the 2019 General Election

Contested Positions	APC	PDP	Other Political Parties
1 President	1	-	-
36 Governors	20	15	1
109 Senators	65	43	1
360 Federal Representatives	190	151	19
36 State Parliament (Houses of Assembly)	Controls 20 states	Controls 15 states	Control 1 state

Source: Authors' Compilation from INEC updated 2019 general election result sheets after final election petitions' verdicts

Out of 91 registered political parties in Nigeria, 73 took part in the 2019 general elections. However, the election as expected was dominated by the two leading political parties as other political parties could not competitively challenge them, particularly in federal elections. A breakdown of the presidential candidates' age shows that about 85% of the candidates were over 40 years of age. In

fact, over 50% of aspirants were above 50 years of age, with only 11 of the 73 presidential aspirants below 40 years of age. Although there were 11 candidates in the 2019 presidential election that would not have been eligible to contest if not for the NTYTRA, their appearance on the ballot paper was however more ceremonial than impactful as both the candidates and the political parties they

represented lacked the financial power to compete in a presidential election. In fact, political parties that produced the under-40 candidates that took part in the presidential election have no history of winning any federal election in Nigeria. In

total, only 18 candidates who would have not been eligible to run if not for the NTYTRA secured party nominations to run for various electoral offices in the 2019 general election. None of them however won the election they contested.

Table 5: Age Brackets of Elected Governors, Senators and House of Representatives’ Members in the 2019 General Election

	Number	Number between 30- 40 Years of Age	Number between 41-50 Years of Age	Number above 51+ Years of Age	% between 30 and 40 Years of Age
Governors	30*	0	0	30	0
Senators	109	0	13	96	0
House of Reps Members	360	12	109	249	3.3

Source: Authors’ computation from candidates’ biodata available in INEC official records and press releases *Governorship election was not held in 6 out of 36 states of the Federation

Table 5 above shows the age bracket of all successful candidates in the gubernatorial, Senatorial and House of Representatives elections in 2019. It should be noted also that the data in Table 5 took account of the outcome of post-election litigations and all the changes in the declaration of winners were reflected. Moreover, the Governorship election did not take place

in 6 out of the 36 states of the Federation during the general election due to interruptions in their respective Governorship election cycle. They include Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Kogi and Osun states. However, none of the Governors of the 6 states was below the age of 40 at the date of swearing-in on 29 May 2019. Only one Governor (Yahaya Bello of Kogi state) was under the age of 50 at the swearing-in date. In the current

9th National Assembly, 88.1% of members of the Nigerian Senate were over 50 years of age at the date of the inauguration on 11 June 2019. No single member of the Nigerian Senate was below the age of 40 on the inauguration date. Only 12 members of the lower House of Representatives were below the age of 40 on the inauguration date. That is 3.3% of the total 360 members of the lower house as compared to 249 members who were above 50 years of age (69.2% of total members).

The NotTooYoungToRun campaign succeeded in creating awareness of the need for more representation of young Nigerians in elective positions. This is evident not only in the global campaign it sparked off but also in the mass social media followership it got from young people in Nigeria. In terms of substance, however, it is incapable of addressing the problem of the under-representation of youths in elective offices in the country. This is because the character of the post-independence Nigerian state creates a party system that reinforces the use of money to alienate people from electoral positions or offices. Thus the absence of internal party democracy in the dominant political parties in Nigeria as exemplified by the continuous overbearing influence of party financiers makes it difficult for

any law or act that can threaten their privileged positions to be effective. The implication of this is that the alterations made before the NTYTRA became law were conscious attempts by cronies and beneficiaries of these party financiers to suppress any provisions in the act that will threaten their benefactors' firm grip on political power and uninterrupted primitive access to the financial resources of the state. Notably, demands for effective financial regulation of campaign funding to protect young candidates with limited resources, the imposition of term limits for federal and state parliamentarians to curtail abuse of incumbency power, and the legitimization of independent candidacy were not included in the final draft of the bill forwarded for the Presidential assent.

Conclusion

This paper examined the link between political party financing and the ineffectiveness of the NTYTRA in Nigeria and contended that the poor regulation of party financing undermines the purpose of the NTYTRA. The study argued that the continuous overbearing influence of party financiers on electoral outcomes is implicated in the decision by the elected parliamentarians (who are mostly beneficiaries of these party financiers) to make alterations to the

original demands of the Not-Too-Young-To-Run campaign that eventually weakened the effectiveness of the Act. The paper also argued that the moderations in the original demands of civil society groups that championed the NotTooYoungToRun campaign played a key role in undermining the performance of young candidates in the 2019 general election. These moderations gave an unfair advantage to candidates who were predominantly career and veteran politicians and cronies of these party financiers. Nigeria is a multi-party state with dominant two parties, and over 90%

of the primary contests in the two dominant parties before the 2019 general elections were won by politicians over 50 years of age. These older politicians are predominantly beneficiaries of unregulated financing of party campaigns which gives them undue advantages in the run-up to elections. Thus we recommend the need for the effective regulation of relevant electoral laws on party financing and a review of the identified provisions in the NTYTRA that still undermine the fair participation of young political aspirants in electoral contests.

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